

Write It Down

Preparing for the Council on Accreditation

On Sept. 26, the DCS Central Office and regional representatives at the meeting on documentation of COA standards voted unanimously to send the council a letter expressing the department's intent to become accredited.

The group also to keep the high degree of momentum achieved during the process of acquiring COA standards documentation. Although accreditation will be a lengthy and arduous process -- lasting for about three years -- the time to begin preparation is now.

An extremely important element in achieving accreditation is documentation (which consistently is required in all of the standards) of what we do. For a good start, **we need to begin now to document all of our business meetings, conferences and training.**

Minutes must be kept on all business meetings (both regular and ad hoc) and conferences. Documenting all training activities is also necessary.

The minutes or training activity should reflect the following as applicable:

- **Attendees (to include the division/service or stakeholder representation)**
- **Purpose of the meeting/training if not stated elsewhere**
- **Name of the meeting/training**
- **Any pertinent discussion**
- **Decisions/actions taken**
- **Follow-up**
- **A "keeper of documentation" should be assigned**
- **Documentation should be maintained in chronological order**
- **Every division should keep a list of documentation for which it is responsible to include the name and date of the meeting/training and "keeper of documentation".**

All of this is in keeping with the old adage, “If it hasn’t been documented, it hasn’t been done.” Let’s do it.

-- Ted Silber

Going to the Country

Rural Symposium Takes Close Look At Challenges

On Sept. 7-8, the Northwest and Southwest regions hosted a Rural Symposium at Paris Landing State Park. Welcomes and Introductions were presented by the two hosts RA’s, Kitty Oliver and Mildred Lawhorn.

The symposium was designed for rural, multi-county regions, where due to smaller population concentrations and larger areas, have characteristically fewer resources to provide to a like number of children and families than their urban counterparts.

On the first day, guest speakers began with **Pam Brown** from the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth. She presented an analysis of reports concerning the rural South, especially Alabama, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

Updated KidsCount data was supplied to the group.

Doug Fluegal, the Statewide 211 Director, then spoke on the implementation and rollout of the 211 system. This is both a web- based item, and a dial in system of resources for children and families. These calls are fielded by an actual worker, who then presents a customized list of resources to the caller based on their area of availability. **Servella Terry**, Director of Recruitment and Retention, gave a stirring message regarding the duty of everyone in the Department towards Recruitment, and the critical need this fills for the child.

The second day included speaker **Pam White**, from the Community Anti-Drug Coalition Across TN (CADCAT). She and **Keith Jones** from Bright Horizons, in conjunction with the Tennessee National Guard, presented materials on the war against methamphetamine use in the state of Tennessee.

This was followed by a feedback sessions across the regions on the difficulty of accessing resources, identifying non-existent resources, and alternative methods of funding.

Teresa Lury wrapped up the symposium. She's a consultant who has conducted various region-specific needs assessments across the country.

A critical item identified by her research in other states has established that proper identification of needs and appropriate services in the foster care end of the system provides both lower re-entry there, and less entry into the Juvenile Justice system.

-- W. Clay Crook

Magnolia Girls

All Wrapped Up in Hurricane Relief

Many, many Americans were deeply moved by the images of the massive destruction and the heroic rescues of the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The female residents of two group homes in Lewisburg were no exception.

They saw the need--and they wanted to help.

An idea was suggested that they crochet blankets (or afghans) to be distributed to the evacuees. The girls excitedly took on the project. But they needed plenty of yarn and most did not know how to crochet. Staff assisted by purchasing yarn for the project and teaching the girls the fine art of "knit 1, pearl 2." They found them to be eager learners.

This was clearly evident during a recent visit by DCS to the two group homes involved in the project. Almost all the residents were observed "crocheting away" at their blankets; and they proudly displayed what they had done. When they are through there will be a colorful array of blankets that can be distributed to the needy, displaced victims of this terrible hurricane.

And it appears that the girls' enthusiasm is contagious. A little bird told the DCS worker that some of the male residents of the shelter have now begun to inquire about the possibility of taking

crochet lessons. It looks like they don't want to be left out of the loop. (There goes the male/female stereotype).

But it's all for a good cause and I think that the Magnolia Girls Program--staff and residents-- are to be applauded for their compassion for others less fortunate.

-- Carol Wiser